

## CHT PEACE ACCORD: 27 YEARS OF UNKEPT PROMISES

‘Frustration high in the hills for non-implementation’

**KS Mong, a member of Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and a central committee member of Parbatya Chattogram Jana Sanghati Samity, shared his insights with The Daily Star on the current situation in the hills, local politics, security concerns, and the challenges surrounding the CHT Peace Accord.**

MD ABBAS

**The Daily Star:**

How do the hill people perceive the changes since the fall of the Awami League government?

**KS Mong:** They take it positively, which is why we congratulate the interim government.

**TDS:** Some days after the new government assumed office, the situation in the CHT suddenly became tense. How do you perceive this?

**KS Mong:** Firstly, the longstanding grievances and frustrations among the hill population due to the non-implementation of the CHT Peace Accord have reached a boiling point. Secondly, groups opposed to the accord have long been conspiring to render it dysfunctional. The hill population believes these factors may have contributed to the current situation.

Since the accord was signed, certain factions have actively worked against it. These groups have never gained support from the hill people; their actions have mainly focused on creating divisions. Some factions have received backing from specific interest groups, and it cannot be said that such support has entirely vanished even now.

The primary intent of these factions is to sow discord among the hill people through a “divide and rule” strategy. However, they have not succeeded in their objectives. Their main goal has been to disrupt the peace in the hills.

**TDS:** Alongside the “hill people vs Bangalee” discourse, infighting among regional hill organisations has persisted for a long time. Why can’t the hill people remain united?

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## A political crisis that needs a political solution

Speakers on CHT issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political leaders and rights activists yesterday identified the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) crisis as a fundamentally political issue, which requires resolution through political and humanitarian approaches with time-bound priorities.

Speaking at a discussion titled “27 Years of CHT Peace Accord: Expectations and Progress” in the capital, they said the 1997 accord should be fully implemented to achieve peace, unity, and development in the region.

The event was organised by the Parbatya Chattogram Treaty Implementation Movement at the Engineers Institute to mark the treaty’s anniversary.

Abu Saeed Khan, advisory editor of Daily Samakal, said, “It seems there is an attempt to resolve the issue through force and coercion. However, military approaches are not the solution. The CHT problem is fundamentally political and must be resolved politically and humanely.”

“For 27 years, those in power have ignored the accord. Without addressing the issues in the CHT, peace, democracy, and human rights cannot be established in the country,” he added.

He said the vision of an inclusive state born from the July uprising remains absent in the interim government.

Zakir Hossain, joint coordinator of CHT Accord Implementation Movement, said “Behind the façade of development activities in the CHT lies a policy of militarisation and exploitation. A clear timeline and effective action plan are necessary for implementing the accord.”

He also called for coordinated national and international efforts to ensure peace in the region.

Criticising the interim government, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General

Secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince said, “The July movement aspired to create a discrimination-free Bangladesh. Yet, this vision is absent. Implementing the accord requires political will, not just declarations. Have we seen military camp withdrawals during these three months? Certainly not.”

Shamsul Huda, executive director of Association of Land Rights and Development, pointed to the inaction of the Land Dispute Resolution Commission, a critical component of the accord.

“Opposition groups have been deliberately created to obstruct the implementation,” he alleged.

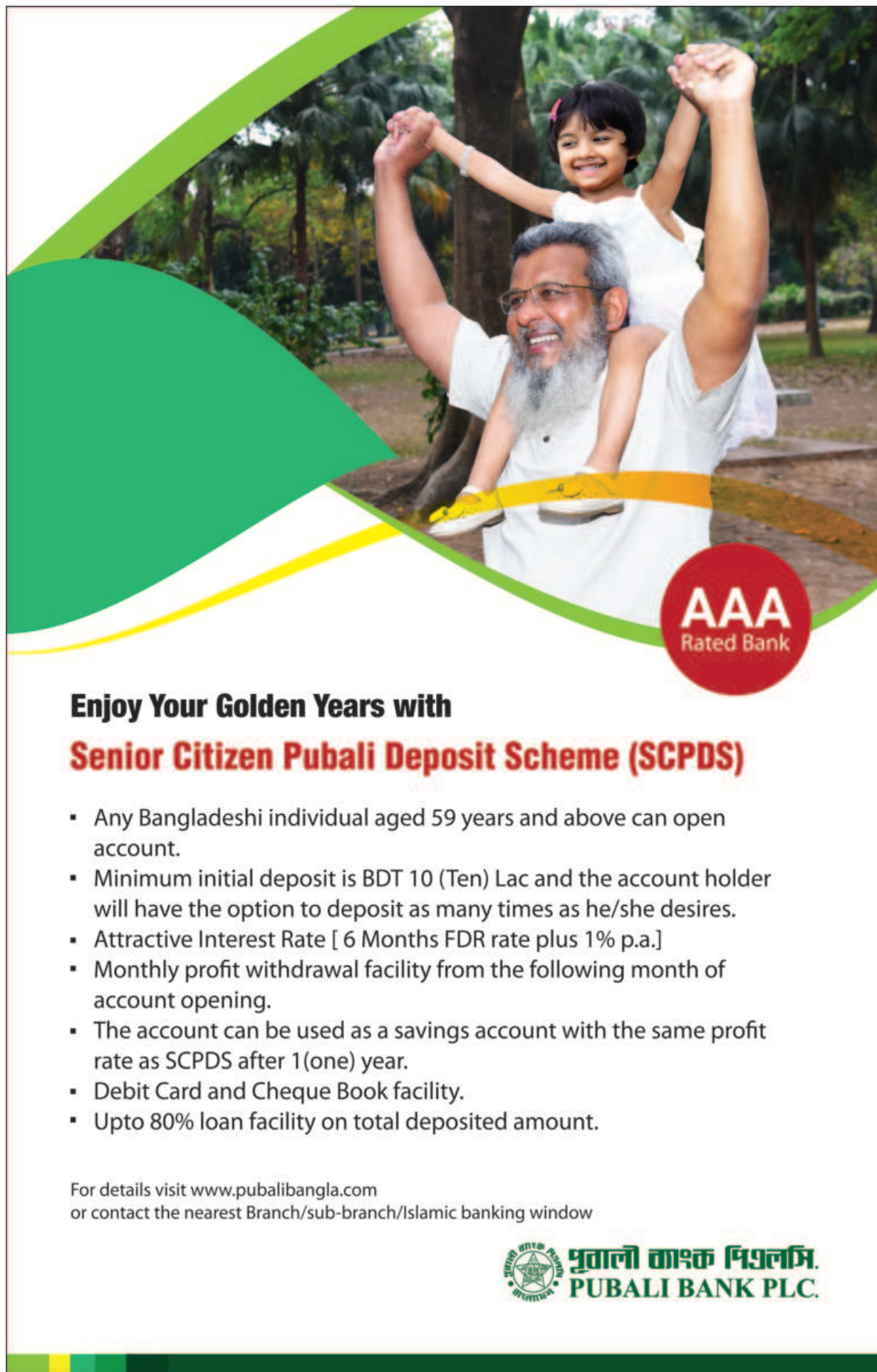
**For 27 years, those in power have ignored the accord. Without addressing the issues in the CHT, peace, democracy, and human rights cannot be established in the country.**

ABU SAEED KHAN  
Advisory editor, Daily Samakal

Syed Madud, presidium member of Nagorik Oikya, said, “The destruction of forests and biodiversity in the name of development has pushed the indigenous people further into marginalisation.”

Nazmul Haque Pradhan, general secretary of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, expressed frustration, saying, “The systemic neglect of the CHT people’s aspirations is disheartening. Without implementing the accord, the country cannot move forward. The interim government must prove its commitment to building an inclusive and equitable state.”

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## ‘His thoughts more relevant following July uprising’

Says Prof Salimullah Khan on Abul Mansur Ahmad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India wants to colonise Bangladesh using the excuse that it helped Bangladesh during the 1971 Liberation War, said Prof Salimullah Khan at an event yesterday.

“Did we shed so much blood to free ourselves from Pakistan’s rule, only to become a colony of India?” asked Prof Khan.

Prof Salimullah, a teacher at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, made the remarks at a seminar titled “Abul Mansur Ahmad’s Political Thought: Context and Uprising” at Chittagong University. It was organised by the CU chapter of Rastrochinta. Sheikh Hasina turned Bangladesh into a vassal of India in foreign relations, he said.

“After ousting her, now the task is to foster unity among people. To counter provocations aiming to create unrest,

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## HSIA THIRD TERMINAL

## Aviation officials slam Biman over soaring costs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Higher-ups of top airlines criticised Biman yesterday for its poor ground handling services at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport during a roundtable discussion.

They called for the abolition of Biman’s monopoly and the allocation of the HSIA third terminal to multiple companies through an open tender.

Aviation and Tourism Journalists Forum of Bangladesh organised the discussion, titled “Third Terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport: Opportunities and Challenges”, at a city hotel.

Dilara Hossain, chairman of Airlines Operators Committee, said current operation costs of foreign airlines are very high compared to neighbouring countries. The current ground handling agency charges are also very high compared to other airports. “As a result, ticket prices also increase,” she added.

While presenting the keynote paper, Novoir Managing Director Mofizur Rahman said, “Biman can be given the responsibility of the ground handling operations of the third terminal if it considered eligible compared to other operators.”

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## INT’L DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

## Shot, July heroes battle a harsh new reality

AHMED DEEPTO and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Rakib Hossain, a barber from Narayanganj, has been fighting two battles since the July mass uprising – one for his health and another for his family’s survival.

Shot during protests near Kanchpur Bridge on the evening of July 20, Rakib lost his left leg after undergoing surgery at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation.

Recently fitted with an artificial limb, the 24-year-old finds little solace.

“I used to contribute Tk 5,000 to Tk 8,000 a month to my family,” said Rakib. “Now, that’s gone. My family had to take a loan of over Tk 1 lakh for my

**Many of those injured were sole breadwinners. They now face a lifetime of financial struggles, often relying on loans for treatment. This creates a vicious cycle of poverty.**

PROF ABDUL HAMID  
Institute of Health Economics,  
Dhaka University

treatment. I can barely sleep at night due to the pain and worry about what lies ahead.”

Rakib’s father runs a small grocery shop, but the burden of

medical expenses and the loss of Rakib’s income have left the family financially strained.

Like Rakib, many injured during the uprising face an uncertain future.

Over 22,000 people were injured during the July-August mass protests, with 587 left permanently disabled and 21 losing limbs, according to the Health Central Sub-Committee of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement.

**ECONOMIC HARDSHIP AND EMOTIONAL TOLL**

Thirty-year-old Mohammad Shaon, a motor mechanic injured by a bullet in his left elbow, has been undergoing treatment at NITOR since August 12. Once

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## Bangladesh halves power purchase from Adani: report

The Indian company says Dhaka not reviewing deal

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh has halved the power it buys from Adani Power, citing lower winter demand, as it seeks to sharply lower prices under a purchase deal with the Indian company, reports Reuters.

Amid disagreements over dues running into hundreds of millions of dollars, Adani halved supply to Bangladesh on October 31 over payment delays as the country battles a foreign exchange shortage.

Subsequently, officials said Bangladesh told Adani to keep supplying only half the power for now, although it will keep paying its old dues.

“We were shocked and angry when they cut our supply,” Md Rezaul Karim, chairperson of the state-run Bangladesh Power Development Board, told Reuters. “Winter demand is now down, so we have told them there is no need to run both units of the plant,” he said.

After the High Court ordered a committee of experts last week to examine the contract with Adani, Reuters on Sunday reported that the government wants to renegotiate the contract “in

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## Verdict declaring Aug 15 national holiday stayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has stayed a High Court verdict that justified August 15 as the national mourning day and a public holiday.

The full bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed, passed the order on Sunday following a leave to appeal petition filed by the government challenging the HC judgement.

On August 13 this year, the advisory council of the interim government decided that there would be no national holiday on August 15.

Meanwhile, the government has recently filed a petition with the Appellate Division seeking a stay on the HC verdict that on March 10, 2020, declared “Joy Bangla” as the country’s national slogan and ordered the government to take necessary steps so that the slogan is used at all state functions and academic institutions’ assemblies.

The apex court may hold a hearing on the petition next Sunday.